

Emergency Big Game Feeding Policy

The winter of 2007-08 proved to be a challenge for big game. As the Division began evaluating the need to provide winter supplements last year it became clear that our current policy lacked the necessary detail to make informed decisions concerning when winter feeding is appropriate. This informational will present an approach to measure and test the five most important factors influencing big game winter survival. These factors and decision triggers will become an Appendix to the Emergency Big Game Feeding Policy and tested through March of 2010 when the policy is due for renewal.

Five factors with proposed triggers:

- 1) Factor: Body condition of deer going into winter
 Trigger: Unit mean of fall check station xiphoid fat measurement of prime deer (3.5+) < 10mm
- 2) Factor: Rate of body condition decline throughout winter
 Trigger: Mean xiphoid fat measurement of road killed prime deer (3.5+) on Unit at the time feeding is considered < 2mm
- 3) Factor: Availability of forage, primarily shrubs
 Trigger: Shrubs at location considered for feeding are covered by snow
- 4) Factor: Ability of big game animals to access forage
 Trigger: Mean snow depth at location considered for feeding is >20 inches
- 5) Factor: Extreme cold temperatures
 Trigger: Mean daily temperatures at location considered for feeding are 10° F below 30 year average